

Message Text

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13

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAJ-01 TRSE-00 AID-05 IO-13 OMB-01 /088 W

----- 040919

R 081009Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO /SECSTATE WASHDC 6544

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 7912

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SA, UR

SUBJECT: SAUDI-USSR RELATIONS

REF (A) JIDDA 7761, (B) MOSCOW 18840

SUMMARY: SOVIET NEW TIMZ ARTICLE HAS ANNOYED SAG AND
PROBABLY STIFFENED THEIR DETERMINATION TO RESIST SOVIET
ENCROACHMENT IN THE PENINSULA. END SUMMARY

1. SINCE THE TWO CRITICAL EDITORIALS REPORTED REF A
APPEARED IN THE SAUDI PRESS, THE NEWSPAPER UKAZ HAS
RUN TWO MORE EDITORIALS ATTACKING THE USSR. IN
REF A WE NOTED THAT UKAZ IS A SOMETIME MOUTHPIECE
FOR CROWN PRINCE FAHD. THERE NOW SEEMS LITTLE DOUBT
THAT IN ITS PRESENT SERIES OF EDITORIALS UKAZ IS
EXPRESSING THE TENOR OF THE CROWN PRINCE'S DISPLEASURE
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IF NOT HIS PRECISE VIEWS.

2. IF, AS EMBASSY MOSCOW SUGGESTS IN REF B, THE NEW TIME ARTICLE REFLECTS AN ABANDONMENT BY THE SOVIETS OF THEIR DRIVE TO ESTABLISH AND IMPROVE RELATIONS IN THE GULF REGION, AND IN PARTICULAR WITH SAUDI ARABIA, WE THINK THEY HAVE MADE A MISTAKE MUCH TO OUR BENEFIT.

3. THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANGE IN THE BASIC SAUDI POLICY OF REFUSING DIRECT RELATIONS WITH COMMUNIST STATES BUT THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF RECENT SIGNS OF SOME SOFTENING OF HOSTILITY TOWARDS THEM--IN LARGE PART BECAUSE OF IRRITATION WITH ASPECTS OF AMERICAN POLICY. SUCH ACTIONS AS WE HAVE NOTED HAVE PERHAPS BEEN INTENDED MORE TO SHOW THE U.S. THAT THE SAG IS NOT A CLIENT WITH NO POLICY ALTERNATIVES THAN AS GESTURES TOWARDS THE COMMUNISTS.

4. NONETHELESS, SOVIET LACK OF PATIENCE MAY HAVE BLOWN AN OPPORTUNITY. REPORTING FROM OTHER ARAB GULF POSTS HAS INDICATED AN INCLINATION BY HOST GOVERNMENTS TO ACCEPT SOME REPRESENTATION BY COMMUNIST STATES WITH SAUDI OPPOSITION AS THE MAJOR INHIBITING FACTOR. WHILE SAUDI PRESSURE WAS A FACTOR OF SOME IMPORTANCE IN THE DECISION BY KUWAIT AND BAHRAIN TO PUT TOUGHER CONTROLS ON INTERNAL LEFTIST ACTIVITY, SAUDI ARABIA AT THE SAME TIME HAS TAKEN A SOMEWHAT LESS RIGID LINE IN ITS DEALINGS WITH RADICAL ARAB STATES, INCLUDING A GREATER DEGREE OF ACCEPTANCE OF THE REALITY OF THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE USSR AND OTHER COMMUNIST COUNTRIES. THIS MIGHT HAVE EVOLVED INTO A LESSENERED DEGREE OF OPPOSITION TO COMMUNIST REPRESENTATION IN THOSE GULF STATES WHERE THERE NOW IS NONE. IT IS LESS LIKELY TODAY THAT THERE WILL BE ANY CHANGE IN THE SAUDI POSITION.

5. WE WERE ALSO STRUCK BY HOW QUICKLY THE SAUDIS RE-ACTED (PERHAPS THE EGYPTIANS TOLD THEM ABOUT IT), AND BY THE VEHEMENCE, ANIMOSITY AND LACK OF SUBTLETY OF THE NEW TIME ARTICLE. THE SAUDIS SEEM TO BE STICKING TO THEIR TRADITIONAL POSITION, BUT THEY SEEM TO BE CONFIDENTIAL

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PAYING MORE ATTENTION THAN EVER TO WHAT THE SOVIETS ARE DOING AND SAYING.
PORTER

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